

2024 WEBINAR

Aesthetic and Social Constructions of Energy Transition

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22 January 2024 | 16:00 - 18:00 GMT | Free to join

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KEYNOTE

Learning to Live in 3D:
Decarbonization, decoupling & degrowth

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In this talk, I discuss the evolution of the high energy growth paradigm of northern modernity through the overlapping energy regimes of new world plantations (sucropolitics), machinic industrialism (carbopolitics) and plastic mobilization (petropolitics) to help identify some of the key areas of intervention for what I term "decompositional politics" (Boyer 2023). Then I turn to a discussion of three key frontlines of decompositional politics today: decarbonization (decomposing the sucro/carbo/petrostate), degrowth (decomposing habits and systems of productivity-for-its-own-sake) and decoupling, which is, in many respects, the most paradoxical and elusive of the three projects. On the face of things, decoupling seeks to emancipate high energy modernity from its burden of ecological unsustainability while promising at the same time to justly secure the pleasures and luxuries of high energy modernity for all. It sounds too good to be true and indeed recent studies cast serious doubt on the reality of decoupling economic growth from carbon emissions. Is this simply another seductive petrocultural mirage? Perhaps. But it is intriguing that some of the more persuasive degrowth proponents seem to see decoupling as a real possibility under the right circumstances. One striking consonance between decompositional and degrowth politics is the belief that a low energy modernity is not only possible but scalable and sustainable.



ROUNDTABLE

Forgetting Fossils, Figuring Futures



LUCIE DE CARVALHO
University of Lille



KATJA LINDSKOG
Yale University,



GRAEME MACDONALD
University of Warwick



KATIE RITSON
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